

CHAOSTM

PRINCE OF Madness!



THE
(NOT-SO)
SECRET
ORIGIN
OF

**PRINCE
CHAOS!**

FIRST NOTES

A SERIOUS EDITORIAL, HONEST

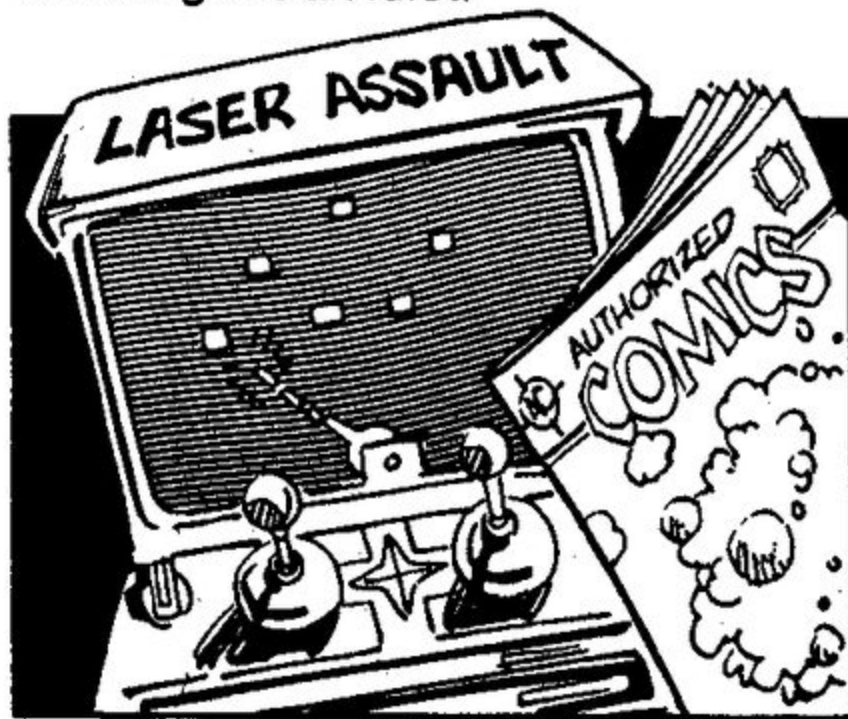
While attending last fall's Boston Newcon, I was listening to a report on the news about the U.S. Surgeon General proclaiming video games to be hazardous to our children's health. Ah, the spectre of Wertham past!

Before I continue, I'd like to make a few things clear: First Comics does not do any work with any video game manufacturers, nor do we carry any advertising from such companies. Not that we wouldn't, we merely haven't. Yet, indeed, we are in competition with video games: the dollars people spend on such entertainment could be spent on comic books, preferably First Comics comic books.

But the words of the Surgeon General bothered me. They still do. The words of the professional doomsayers — the psychologists and so-called educators who denounce whatever it is that kids think is fun — bother me even more.

Several days later, I came across a tiny notice in the Boston GLOBE that said the surgeon general admitted he didn't know

what he was talking about. More to the point, the Surgeon General said his comments were made off-the-cuff, without benefit of facts or studies. He merely said what seemed logical to him at the time. In our business, we call that "babbling like an idiot."



Comics fans properly should find such comments disconcerting. Thirty years ago, our medium was forced into rigorous — and asinine — censorship. Similar comments were made about comic books: in the early 1950s, the so-called experts equated the reading of comic books with the rise in juvenile delinquency, and televised congressional committee hearings schlepped comics people up before the cameras and denounced them as cerebral child molesters.

As Rosanne Rosanadana used to say, it's always something. If it's not one thing, it's another. If it's not comic books, it's video games. Or movies. Or television. Or "violence" in general.

Three, maybe four generations of Americans were raised on Three Stooges movies — yet the hand-wringers believe it is the present generation of children that will be corrupted by them. Three generations of Americans were raised on Bugs Bunny cartoons, yet today "concerned citizens" believe they are bad for our youth. So Bugs Bunny cartoons, Three Stooges shorts and dozens of other entertainment experiences have been forced to go through censorship — scenes cut, works of art reduced to meaningless doilies.

When these people take up their battle, they start talking about levels of violence — today's children witness X hundreds of "acts of violence" per week. THEREFORE we must have less violent programming. We must SAVE THE CHILDREN.

Nonsense. The average child today "witnesses" far fewer "acts of violence" per week on television today than his counterpart did forty years ago, when his parents plopped him down at the movie theater for a Saturday matinee and saw a cartoon, a short, a chapter of a serial, and

two movies — a four hour experience chock full of violence.

That generation grew up to be pretty healthy. My generation, raised on 1950s television, grew up pretty healthy. After thirty years, I think I can say with some certainty that rock and roll isn't destroying our children. The cartoons and movies that were good enough for their parents, their grandparents and their great grandparents are good enough for them.

Comic books do not breed juvenile delinquents. Video games do not breed abnormal children.

But I'll tell you just what — and who — is harming our nation's youth: The attitude that the responsibility for raising our children rests in the hands of someone other than the parents. That is what's harming our children. Parents who persist in blaming outside media (rock music, television, comics, video games); that is who's harming our children. Moronic or money-grubbing psychologists and their ilk who persist in writing books and appearing on television and radio talk shows and encouraging parents to go blame someone else; that is who's harming our children.

To quote a popular rock song: leave the kids alone.

End of serious editorial.

— Mike Gold

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**A FIRST COMICS
PUBLISHING PRODUCTION**

ALSO FIRST IN MARCH:

Jon Sable, Freelance #2: "Death Is A Bum Deal" written and drawn by **Mike Grell**. Why is somebody killing off Bowery Street winos by the gross? How does this tie into a plot involving computer-age Nazis? More importantly, how does Jon Sable fit into all of this? Another book-length thriller guaranteed to keep you on the edge of your chair, and it's on sale right now!

E-Man #4: "The Paper Bomb," drawn by **Joe Staton** and guest-written by **Mike W. Barr**. If you think you're a comic collecting maniac, meet the guy who's such an obsessive he's developed a device that will preserve his own comic book collection — and, at the same time, turn all other paper products into dust! Plus: a Michael Mauser solo-story: "Mauser, P.I." by Barr and **Rick Burchett**. And if you think our short saga takes the short detective to the Hawaiian Islands to meet up with a well-known television detective, don't break your arm patting yourself on the back!



WHAT IS THE
NATURE OF
CHAOS?

IT CAN BE SEEN AS A
PRINCIPLE, A UNIVERSAL
FORCE FOR CHANGE AND
DESTRUCTION;

THOUGH THERE ARE TIMES AND
WORLDS WHERE CHAOS IS A MAN;
A PRINCE OF MADNESS, A ROGUE,
A VILLAIN, A CONQUEROR.

BUT FOR NOW, LET US TURN TO A TIME
WHEN CHAOS WAS ONLY A GLIMMERING STAR-SEED,
HURTLING THROUGH THE VOID FROM THE UNREVEALED
TOWARDS THE UNGUESSABLE--A WANDERING SPARK
OF SPIRIT, WAITING FOR-- BIRTH!

PRESENTS:
A TALE OF SOUND AND FURY, SIGNIFYING--

CHAOS

PRINCE OF MADNESS!

PETER B.
GILLIS
STORY

HOWARD
CHAYKIN
PENCILS

GEORGE
FREEMAN
INKS/COLORS

JANICE
CHIANG
LETTERS

MIKE
GOLD
EDITOR

FEATURING CHARACTERS CREATED BY STUART B. GORDON & BURY ST. EDMUND

PART ONE: A BEGINNING

THE PLANET SHATTUK,
A DISTANT JEWEL IN AN
ALIEN UNIVERSE:

TZARA, WHEN
THE BABY COMES,
WHAT SHOULD WE
NAME HIM?

HIM, JARI?
I WAS HOPING
FOR A GIRL--

LOOK! A
FALLING
STAR!

MAKE A WISH,
JARI--

WAIT! THAT'S
NO METEORITE! IT'S
SOMETHING ELSE--

AND IT'S HEADED
RIGHT FOR US!

BUT BEFORE THE FEARFUL
COUPLE CAN DO MORE THAN
FLINCH, THE STAR-SEED
EXPLODES--

-- BATHING
THEM IN A
GENTLE
SHOWER OF
GLITTERING
SPARKS.

WHATEVER IT WAS, TARZA, I TAKE IT AS A GOOD OMEN!

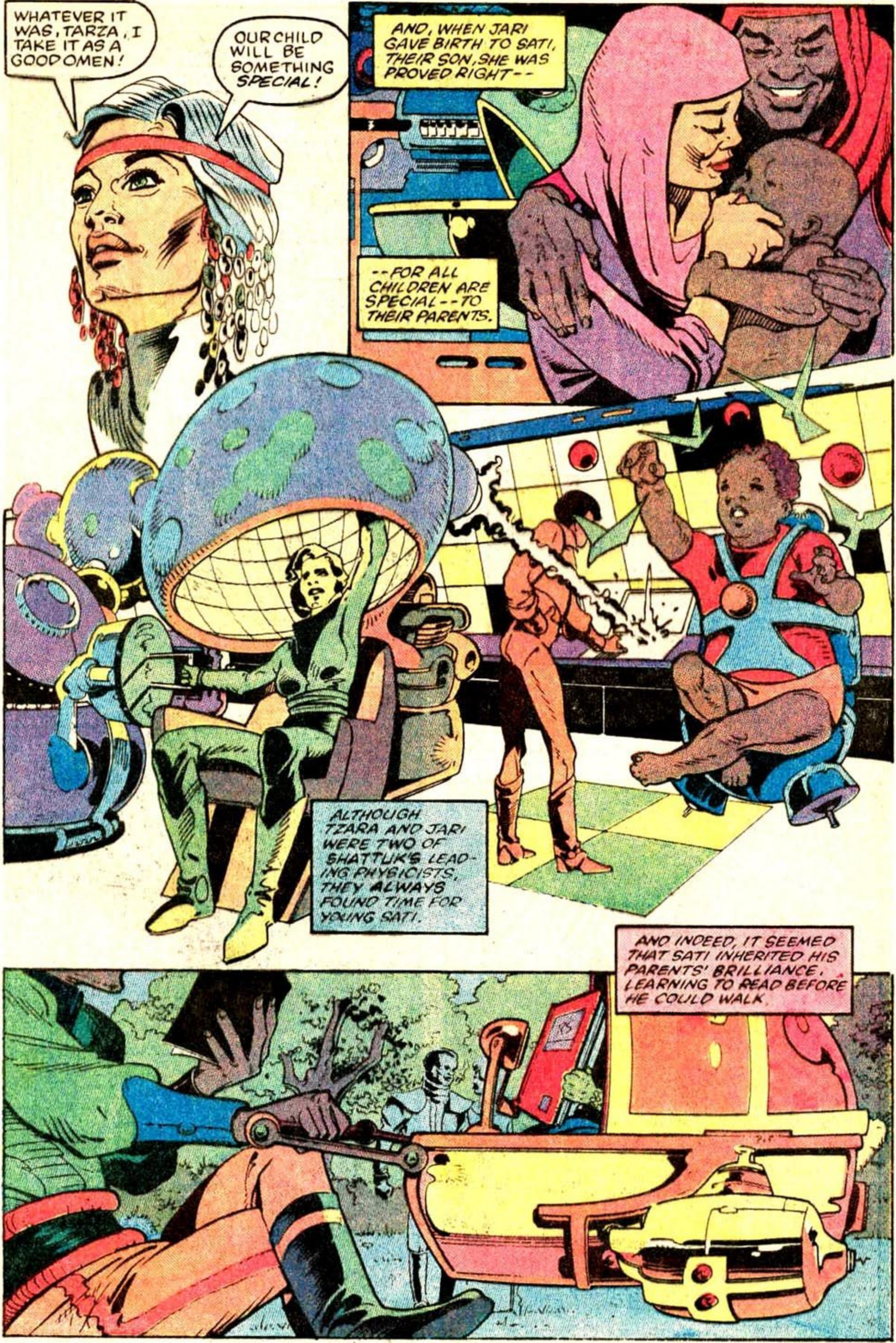
OUR CHILD WILL BE SOMETHING SPECIAL!

AND, WHEN JARI GAVE BIRTH TO SATI, THEIR SON, SHE WAS PROVED RIGHT--

--FOR ALL CHILDREN ARE SPECIAL--TO THEIR PARENTS.

ALTHOUGH TZARA AND JARI WERE TWO OF SHATTUK'S LEADING PHYSICISTS, THEY ALWAYS FOUND TIME FOR YOUNG SATI.

AND INDEED, IT SEEMED THAT SATI INHERITED HIS PARENTS' BRILLIANCE, LEARNING TO READ BEFORE HE COULD WALK.



AND IT WAS ONLY NATURAL THAT TARZA AND JARI WOULD NURTURE THAT BUDDING INTELLECT.



YOU SEE, SATI, A GLUON IS A THING THAT HOLDS QUARKS TOGETHER. THEY COME IN COLORS, JUST LIKE CANDIES...

SO SATI GREW UP STRONG AND HAPPY. AND YET THERE WERE CERTAIN PECULIARITIES IN HIS BEHAVIOR:



MOMMY, CAN I GO OUT AND PLAY?

BUT SATI, NONE OF YOUR FRIENDS ARE AROUND. WHO'LL YOU PLAY WITH?

OH, JUST KAYO. HE'S AROUND.

ALL RIGHT THEN, RUN ALONG.

WHO'S THIS KAYO? I DON'T BELIEVE I KNOW THE NAME.

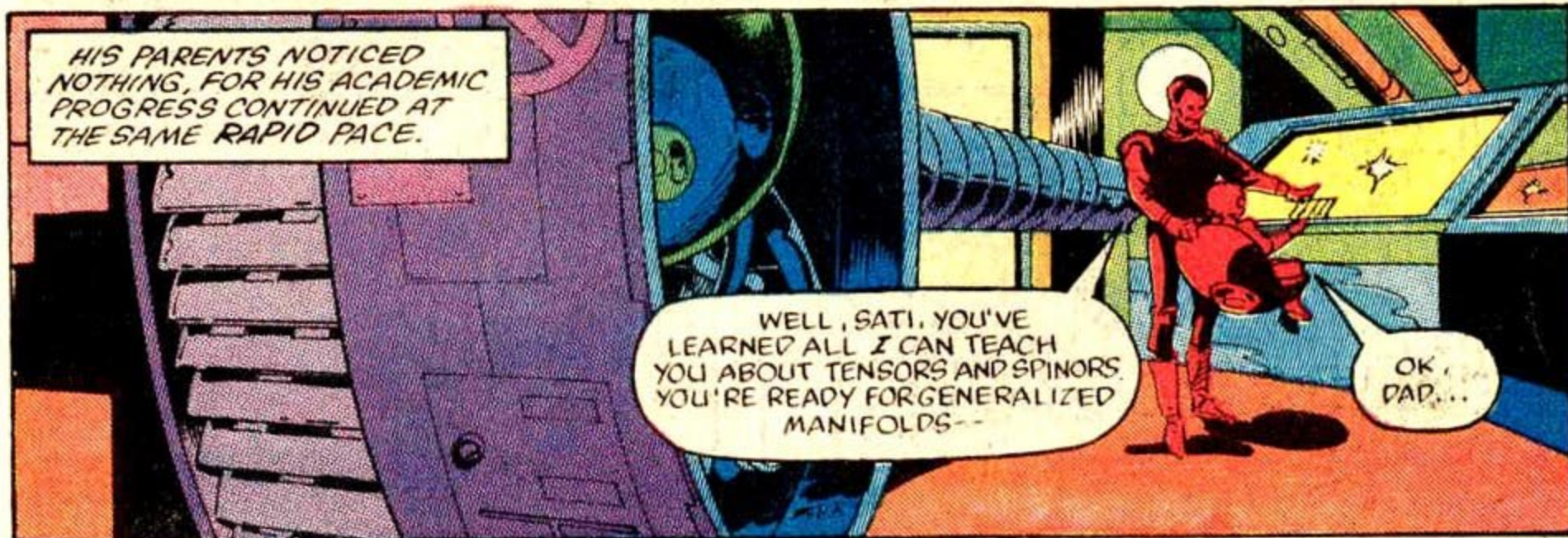
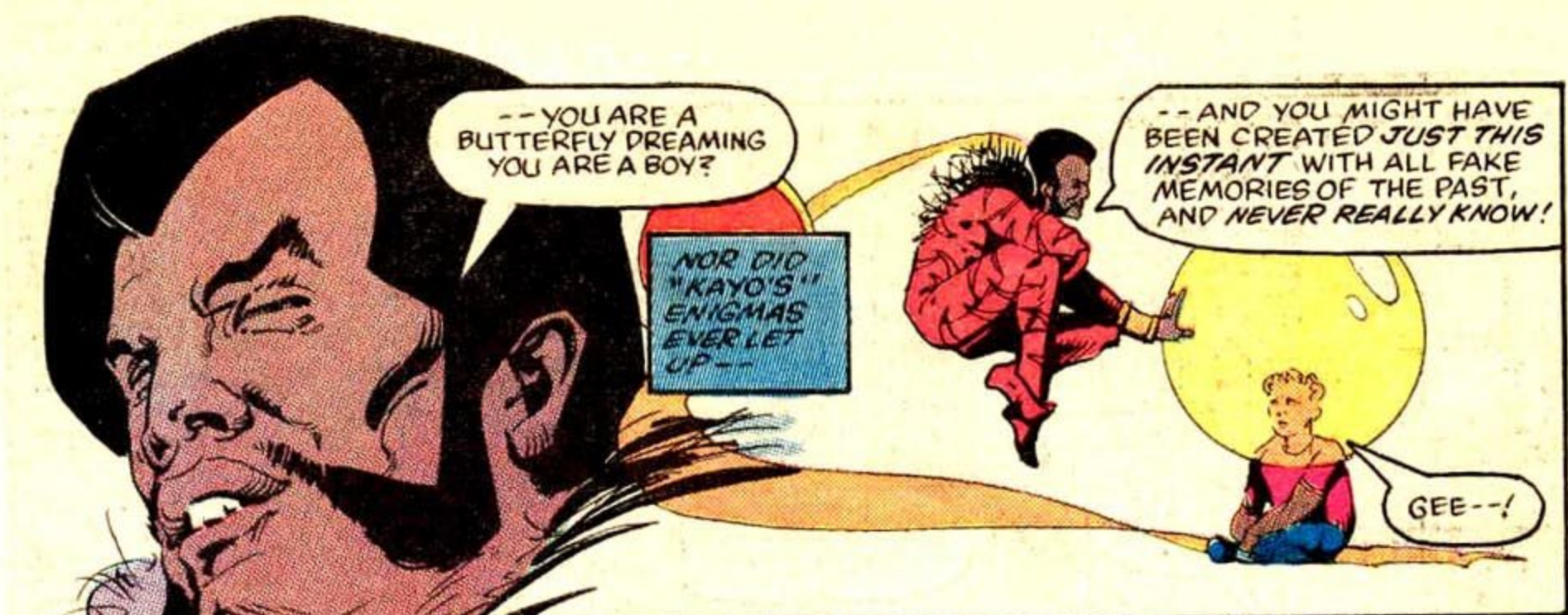
KAYO IS SATI'S IMAGINARY PLAYMATE. THE PSYCHIST SAID IT WAS QUITE NORMAL FOR CHILDREN WITH ACTIVE IMAGINATIONS.



BUT "KAYO" WAS ANYTHING BUT NORMAL--



ALL RIGHT, SATI, I'VE GOT A RIDDLE FOR YOU: SAY LAST NIGHT YOU HAD A DREAM THAT YOU WERE A BUTTERFLY. MIGHT IT NOT BE THAT TODAY--



BUT PHYSICS IS NO SUBSTITUTE FOR FRIENDSHIP.

I DON'T NEED ANY OF 'EM, KAYO! NOBODY CAN HURT ME! NOBODY EVER WILL!

HOW ABOUT YOUR PARENTS?

MAYBE SO, BUT THEY'LL DIE ONE DAY, AND LEAVE YOU.

I WILL! I CAN TAKE ANYTHING YOU'LL SEE!

WELL, THEY WOULDN'T! THEY LOVE ME!

UH-UH. SATI, YOU LOVE THEM TOO MUCH.

WELL, SATI THERE'S ONLY ONE WAY TO FIND OUT...

YOU'VE GOT TO KILL THEM.

I DON'T THINK YOU'LL BE ABLE TO TAKE THAT.

I CAN SO TAKE IT.

AND SO IT CAME TO PASS THAT TZARA TOOK HIS SON TO THE CENTRAL PHYSICAL RESEARCH LAB OF SHATTUK.

AND WHILE HIS FATHER WAS DOING BUSINESS, SATI CHANGED THE ENERGY FLOW ON A CERTAIN EXPERIMENT IN ALTERING QUANTUM NUMBERS IN LOCAL SPACE.

THE WHOLE THING TOOK ONLY A FEW MINUTES FOR SOMEONE OF SATI'S BRILLIANCE.

AND SO,
NOT LONG
AFTERWARD--

BUT WHAT DO
THESE READINGS
MEAN, TZARA?

IT SOUNDS MAD, BUT SOMEHOW
SHATTUK'S CORE HAS BECOME
RADIOACTIVE! A CHAIN REACTION
IS BUILDING THAT WILL TEAR
THE PLANET APART!

HOW LONG DO
WE HAVE? CAN
WE ESCAPE?

ONLY MINUTES--
AN HOUR AT MOST,
BELOVED JARI.

THE ONLY THING WE HAVE
TIME FOR IS TO PLACE SATI IN
THIS PROTOTYPE WARSHIP. HE,
AT LEAST, WILL LIVE.

AND AS THE PLANET SHATTUK
EXPLODES, TORN APART BY ITS
LAST SON, ONE LONE SHIP
ESCAPES.

AND IN THAT SHIP,
SATI REALIZES THAT
LOSING HIS PARENTS
IS, IN FACT, SOMETHING
HE CAN HANDLE.

HIS TRIUMPHANT
LAUGHTER MERGES
WITH HIS IMAGINARY
PLAYMATE'S.

THEY--HE--
WILL NEVER
NEED ANYBODY
EVER AGAIN.

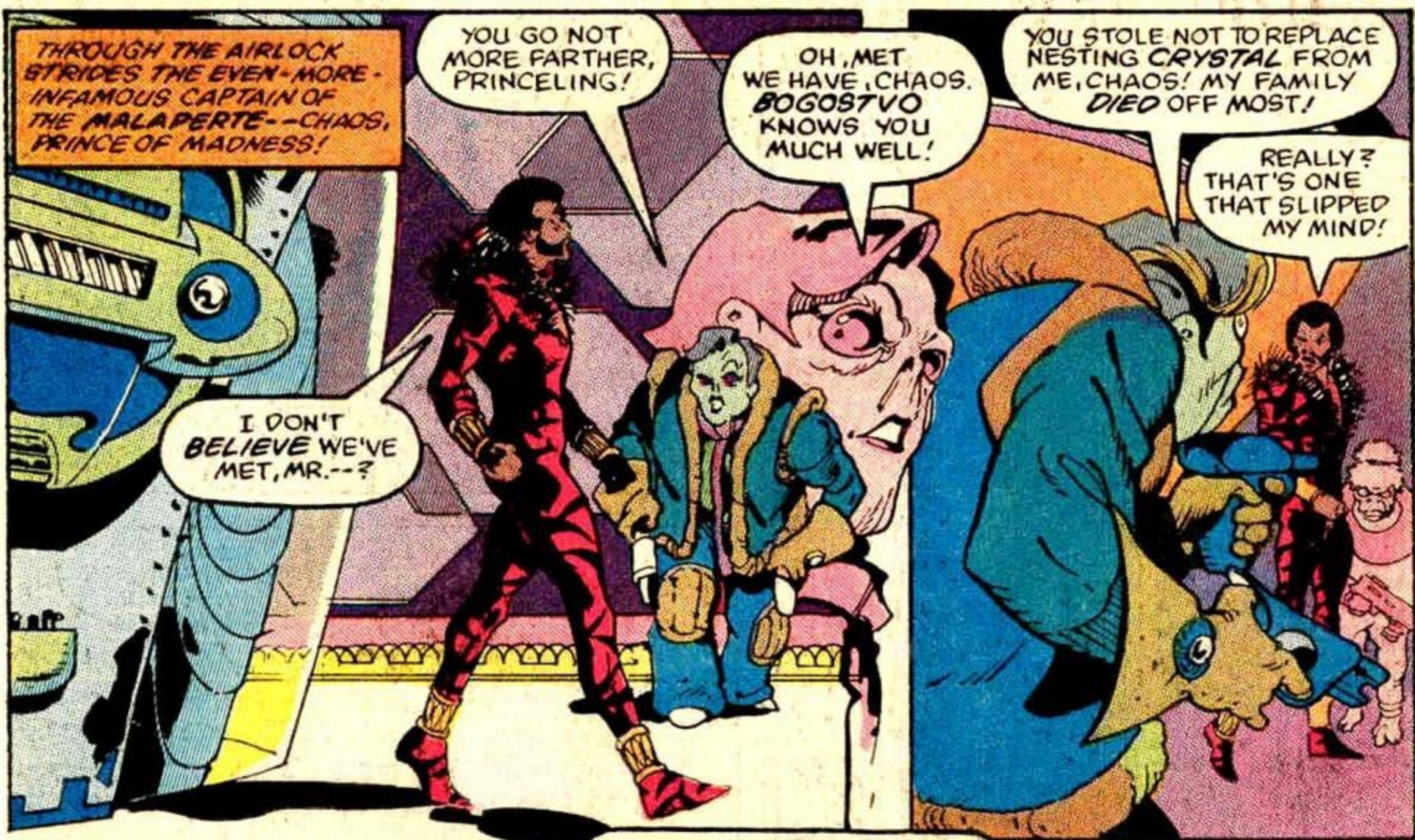
PART TWO: **CYNOSURE**

AT THE HEART OF A
PANDIMENSIONAL VORTEX,
BEYOND AND BETWEEN ALL
SPACE, LIES THE CITY
OF CYNOSURE.

A CRAZY-QUILT AGGLOMERATION
BUILT BY A THOUSAND WILDLY
DIFFERING RACES, CYNOSURE IS
THE CROSSROADS TO EVERYWHERE.

A HUNDRED PLANES, A MILLION
WORLDS TRADE IN THIS BUSTLING
HUB, ACCESSIBLE BY WARP-GATE
OR HYPERSHIP--

AND IT IS HERE, TO CYNOSURE,
THAT THE INFAMOUS SHIP MALAPERTE
MAKES ITS WAY!



YOU *KNOW* THE DOCKS ARE NEUTRAL ZONES, BOGOSTVO! AND CHAOS HAS COMMITTED NO CRIMES IN CYNOSURE-- YET! SO LET'S NOT HAVE ANY AMBUSHES!



ALL GOOD! BUT YOU MORE BETTER WATCH STEP, CHAOS! YOU'VE GOT *ENEMIES*, AND THEY'LL LIKE MUCK KNOWING YOU'RE HERE!



ALLOW ME TO INTRODUCE MYSELF:

I AM LORD CUMULUS, AND I WELCOME YOU TO CYNOSURE!



I TRY TO KEEP PEACE IN CYNOSURE--AND ELSEWHERE! I'M SURE WE'LL GET ALONG FINE IF YOU--



KEEP YOUR HANDS OFF ME!

ALL RIGHT.



CUMULUS IS ONLY MIFFED BY THE OUT-BURST--



-- WHILE CHAOS IS PUZZLED AT THE VEHEMENCE OF HIS OWN REACTION!

BUT THAT STRANGE INSTINCTIVE
REPULSION IS SOON SUBMERGED
IN THE SENSUAL ONSLAUGHT
THAT IS CYNOSURE!

PRINCE CHAOS STRIDES
ITS WALKWAYS, AND LIKES
WHAT HE SEES!



WELL NOW!
THIS MIGHT BE
A NICE PLACE
TO OWN--OR
TO RULE!

AH!
THIS ONE'S
NICE, TOO!



WHAT'S SO
NICE ABOUT HIM,
MISTRESS?

I LIKE
HIS BODY
LANGUAGE,
SYMAX!



AND THE SORCERESS
VALARIA GETS WHAT
SHE LIKES--!



TELEPORTATION BEAMS
ARE INEFFECTIVE INSIDE
CYNOSURE'S WALLS--

HELLO, STRANGER!
LOOKING FOR ANYTHING
IN PARTICULAR?

--SO A FIGURE
MATERIALIZING
ON A WALKWAY IS
A STARTLING
SIGHT!

NO--
NOT ANY
MORE.

-- THE FUZZY APE WITH
THE SCOWL IS SYMAX. HE
CHANGES THE SHEETS.
DO COME IN.

AH, MUSKFRUIT! I ONCE
HELD A MONOPOLY ON THE
MUSKFRUIT TRADE BY
UNLEASHING THE *WHITE
PLAGUE* THROUGHOUT
THE STSO SYSTEM!

FASCINATING,
MY PRINCE!

SPLUTTER!
HEY! WHAT DID
YOU--HOW--

OH, I KNOW ALL
SORTS OF TRICKS,
MY DEAR CHAOS--

I THOUGHT SOMETHING
CLOSER TO YOUR
GENOTYPE--

BUT I CAN BE--
MOST FLEXIBLE--

NOW COME,
MY PRINCE--THE
HOUR DRAWS ON AND
FIRES SUCH AS OURS
ARE NOT EASILY
QUENCHED--

AS--OHhhh--

A THIN FILM OF SWEAT
GLAZES THE TWO BODIES
IN THE DIM LIGHT...

UNTIL AT LAST...

MY LITTLE
VALARIA--I WANT
YOU TO TELL ME--

ANYTHING...



...EVERYTHING
YOU KNOW ABOUT
THIS LORD
CUMULUS...

AND SYMAX'S DERISIVE
LAUGHTER SHAKES THE
WALLS.

HAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA

DAYS LATER, THE FIGURE
OF LORD CUMULUS STRIDES
DOWN A DESERTED HALL TO
STAND BEFORE A CLOSED
WARP-GATE.

THE AMULET AT HIS
CHEST SHINES...

--AND THE
GATE OPENS.

HAIL LUGULBANDA!
HOW FARES FEN-RA?

SO! LORD
CUMULUS HAILS
FROM FEN-RA,
DOES HE?

AS EVER,
LORD--MM--
ER--CUMULUS!

THAT'S VERY INTERESTING,
SYMAX! AND THERE'S A GATE
TO FEN-RA ON CYNOSURE?

I HAVE SOME BITTER
SCORES TO SETTLE
WITH FEN-RA AND
ITS WIZARD--!



MY PRINCE, THIS *CUMULUS* COMES FROM THE INACCESSIBLE CITY OF THE FIFTH PLANE, FEN-RA!

AH, YES! FEN-RA--A LEGENDARY CENTER OF COSMIC POWER, IT IS SAID! THEY DENIED ME ENTRANCE ONCE--

SO HERE'S WHAT WE DO...



I'VE NEVER SEEN A DEVICE SUCH AS THIS, CHAOS!



THAT'S BECAUSE YOU HAVEN'T KNOWN ME! IT SHOULD DECODE THE LOCK AND PRY IT OPEN IN NO TIME!



THAT'S GOOD-- BECAUSE NO TIME IS WHAT YOU'VE GOT!

DAMN IT!



I'M SORRY, BUT THIS GATE MUST REMAIN CLOSED! OTHERWISE, THE UNIVERSAL *BALANCE* MIGHT BE DISRUPTED!

I'M SURE YOU UNDERSTAND.



SINCE THIS IS A FIRST OFFENSE, I'LL LET YOU OFF EASY!

KA-WHOOOM!

THIS SHOULD COVER THE FINE!



SEE YOU AROUND!

THAT SINKS IT! FOR THIS, FEN-RA WILL FALL, AND THAT POMPUS FOOL WILL DIE!

SO, CAPTAIN ISENGRIM, WE HEAR YOUR CREW OF CUTTHROATS IS LOOKING FOR WORK!

TRUE, BLACK-O, BUT WE DON'T COME CHEAP... OR WORK SMALL!



OH, I WOULDN'T SAY THE RAPE AND PLUNDER OF THE FABULOUS CITY OF FEN-RA IS WORKING SMALL!

GRANTED! WHAT'S PAY?

NOT SO FAST! YOU'VE BEEN THROUGH A LOT ISENGRIM--HOW DO I KNOW YOU'RE STILL GOOD IN A FIGHT?

I MAY HAVE LOST TWO OF FIVE EYES AND A FEW LEGS, PRINCE, BUT I'M STILL A MIND-SPIDER!

WE SPIN NERVE-WEBS INSTEAD OF SILK, AND THERE COURSES THROUGH IT THE STRONGEST NERVE-POISON THERE IS! IT CAN DESTROY ANY SENTIENT BEING!

THE PRICE IS RIGHT, CHAOS, BUT I STILL DON'T SEE HOW WE'RE GOING TO GET THROUGH THAT GATE!

I DIDN'T THINK YOU WOULD! BUT IT'S QUITE SIMPLE!

YOU'LL RECALL THAT CYNOSURE IS A MASS OF STRUCTURES HUNG TOGETHER IN A PAN-DIMENSIONAL VORTEX!

POISED VERY DELICATELY IN THE EYE OF THAT STORM, I MIGHT ADD!



ALL WE NEED DO IS
SABOTAGE THE CENTRAL
ANCHORING MECHANISM
THAT HOLDS CYNOSURE--

--AND THE VARIOUS STRUCTURES
WILL DRIFT APART, TOWARD THE
WALLS OF THE VORTEX!

NATURALLY THE
MILLIONS LIVING IN CYNOSURE
WILL BE IN DANGER OF A VERY
GRUESOME DEATH--AND THE
EMERGENCY ESCAPE SYSTEMS
WILL BE ACTIVATED!



KLIK!

KLIK!

CLICK!

KLAK!

"SPECIFICALLY, EVERY WARP-GATE
AUTOMATICALLY OPENS TO SERVE
AS AN ESCAPE ROUTE!"

--AND THAT
INCLUDES THE GATE
TO FEN-RA!

WHAT DID
I TELL YOU --
A LITTLE MASS
DEATH DOES
WONDERS!

AND NOW -- ON
TO FEN-RA!



UP AHEAD SHOULD BE
LUGUL BANDA'S PALACE--
YES! THERE ARE HIS
FACELESS ONE
GUARDS.

I'LL ASK YOU LATER HOW
YOU CAME BY THIS
KNOWLEDGE, VALARIA.

NO ONE IS TO BE ADMITTED
AT THIS TIME. THE WIZARD
SAYS GO AWAY.

WE ARE ARMED.

AND
THEY ARE
MASTERS OF UNDER-
STATEMENT, MY PRINCE!
TAKE CARE!

NOT TO
WORRY, MY DEAR
INSECT QUEEN!
I'VE COME
EQUIPPED!

LIKE SO!

WHAM!

PLEASE,
STOP.

WHO--?



I AM LUGULBANDA,
AND YOU MUST BE PRINCE
CHAOS! A PITY LORD CUMULUS
ISN'T HERE-- IT WOULD BE
SO CONVENIENT--!

STOP
BABBLING,
OLD GOAT,
AND STAND
ASIDE!

BUT YOU
CAN'T APPROACH
THE CRYSTAL! IT'S
THE HEART OF FEN-RA
ITSELF! OH, DEAR--!

IF IT'S
THE HEART OF FEN-RA,
THEN I'LL TAKE IT AND
BREAK IT!

I WANT
IT ALL AND
I WANT IT--
NOW!

I WANT YOUR
TREASURES,
OLD MAN-- I WANT
YOUR KNOWLEDGE--
I WANT YOUR
POWER-- I WANT
YOUR AWE AND
FEAR! DO YOU
HEAR?

I AM CHAOS
PRINCE, OF
MADNESS!

ISENGRIM!
CHAOS! SOMETHING'S
HAPPENING!

WHEW!

CUMULUS!

SORRY, I'M
LATE, REVERED
ONE, BUT I HAD TO
SAVE CYNOSURE!

SORRY, BUT
THE FIRST DEAL
IS MINE!

BLAST
HIM!

BUT NOW,
MADMAN, I'LL DEAL
WITH YOU!

IT PAINS ME TO
DO THIS, BUT YOU
BRING IT ON YOUR-
SELVES!

WATCH AS
I GATHER
YOUR OWN
ENERGIES--



FEEL THEM
TURNED *BACK*
ON YOU--

--AND LEARN
A MOST *BITTER*
LESSON!

THAT WAS JUST
TO SHOW YOU, CHAOS, THAT
YOU'RE NOT FACING SOME
WEAK-KNEED *BOY*!

YOU'RE FACING
LORD CUMULUS,
PROTECTOR OF
FEN-RA!

THAT'S JUST AS I
WANTED IT, *BOY*!



HAVE
AT YOU,
CUMULUS!



FOR MINE IS A GREATER POWER!

YOUR MACHINES
CAN'T GIVE YOU POWER
TO STAND AGAINST
ME, CHAOS!



THE POWER OF
JUSTICE-- TO MAKE
YOU PAY FOR YOUR
CRIMES!



HAVEN'T
YOU HEARD,
CUMULUS?
THERE
AIN'T NO
JUSTICE!



AT LEAST
NOT WHILE I'M
AROUND!



THERE!
SAVE YOUR
MASTER FROM
A FALLING
PALACE!



AT THE KEY WORD 'NERVE',
ISENGRIM ACTIVATES THE
DEADLY NEURO-POISON IN
HIS WEB--

-- A WEB VERY CAREFULLY
SPUN OVER PRINCE CHAOS'S
COSTUME!

SURPRISE,
CUMULUS!
PREPARE
TO DIE!

PRINCE CHAOS!
PLEASE-- DO NOT
FIGHT CUMULUS!

YOU AND HE--
ARE BROTHERS!

BROTHERS?
GOOD-- THAT KEEPS
THIS IN THE
FAMILY!

BY HE
WHO DREAMS!
THE LORD
CUMULUS--IS
DYING!

GIVE IT UP,
CUMULUS! YOU HEARD
THE MAN!

NOW,
CUMULUS,
NO MATTER
HOW STRONG
YOU ARE--

-- THE NEURO-
POISON WILL
DRAIN ALL
LIFE FROM
YOU!

YES--

YES,
PRINCE OF
MADNESS,
YOU MAY
KILL
ME--

--BUT YOU
SHALL NOT
CONQUER!

BY KATHULO!

YES, HE
IS GONE, BUT IN
DEATH HE HAS
TRIUMPHED!

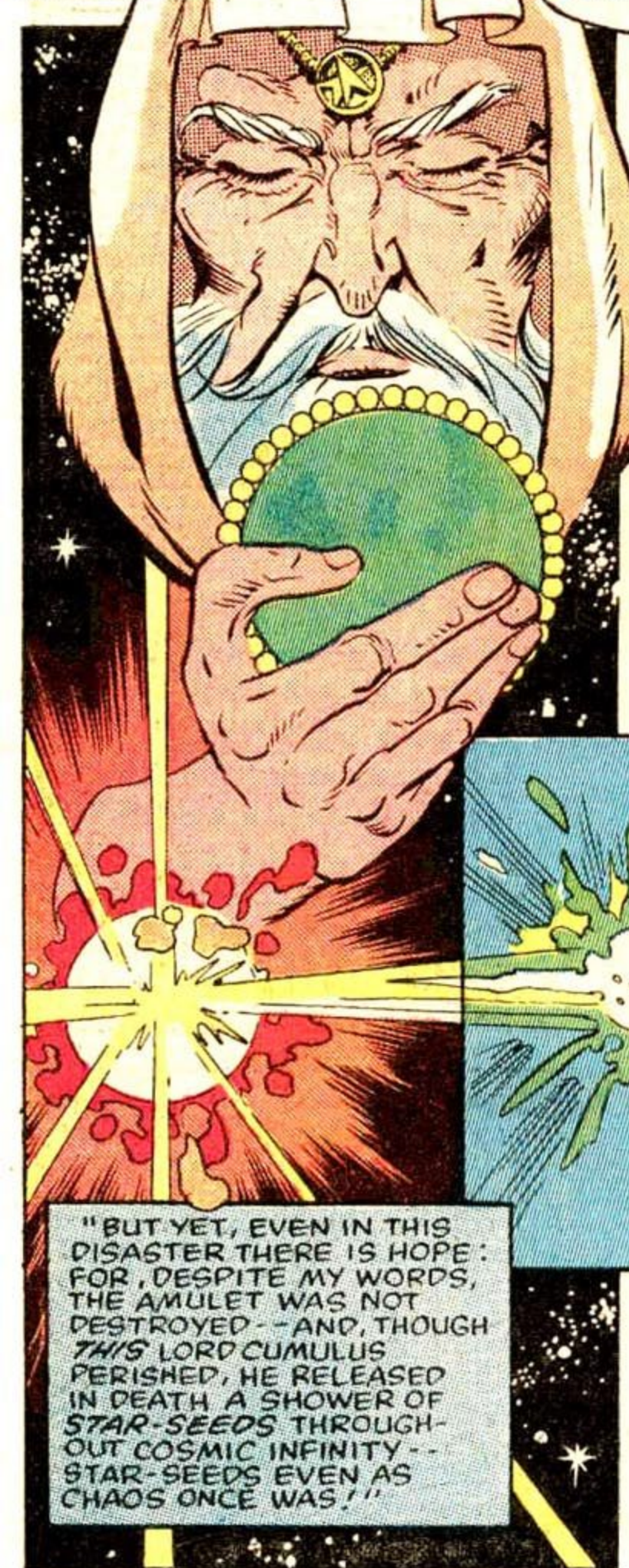
BUT AT
WHAT A
PRICE!

HE'S--
GONE!

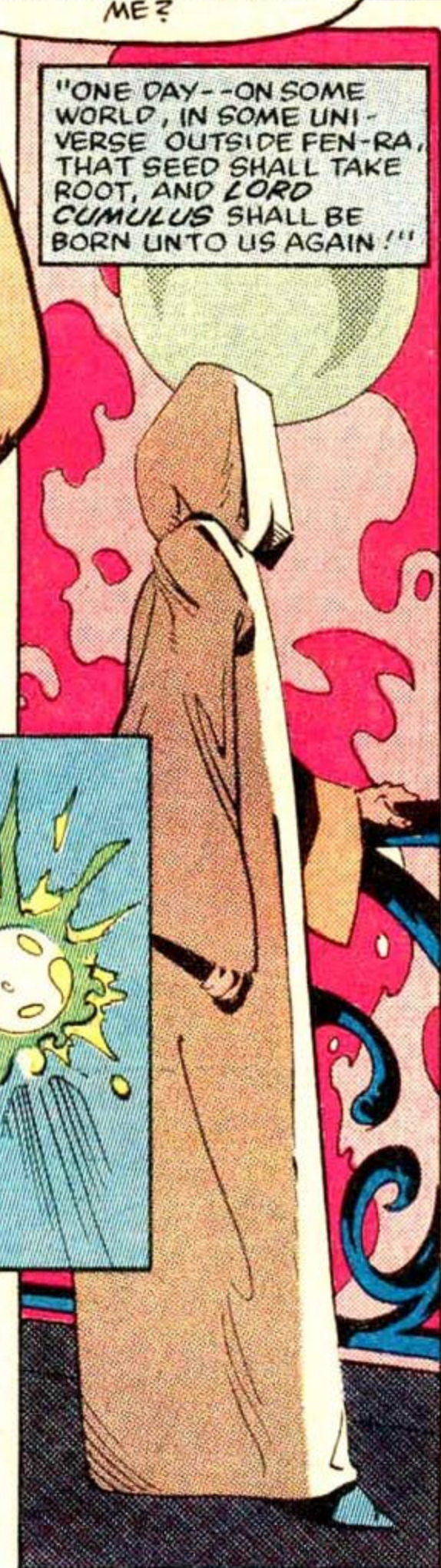
WITH HIS DEATH--AND
THE DESTRUCTION OF THE
AMULET AT HIS BREAST-- THE
COSMIC CRYSTAL HAS GONE **DARK!**
THE ENTIRE FIFTH PLANE IS NOW
SEALED OFF FROM THE REST OF
THE MYRIAD UNIVERSES! YOU
ARE TRAPPED HERE FOREVER!



FACELESS
ONES! BEFORE THEIR
POWERS RETURN--CAST
THEM INTO THE ABYSS
BEYOND FEN-RA!



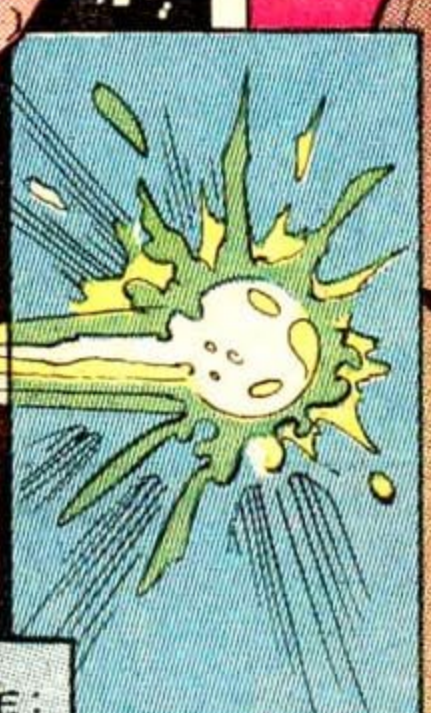
IT'S NOT THAT EASY,
YOU OLD GEEZER! I'LL BREAK
THE BARRIER--AND I'LL DESTROY
YOU, JUST AS I DESTROYED
CUMULUS! DO YOU HEAR
ME?



"ONE DAY--ON SOME
WORLD, IN SOME UNI-
VERSE OUTSIDE FEN-RA,
THAT SEED SHALL TAKE
ROOT, AND LORD
CUMULUS SHALL BE
BORN UNTO US AGAIN!"



"BUT EVEN WHEN THAT
DAY ARRIVES, OUR
CHAMPION SHALL STILL
FACE A MOST FORMID-
ABLE ANTAGONIST--
CHAOS, PRINCE OF
MADNESS!"



"BUT YET, EVEN IN THIS
DISASTER THERE IS HOPE:
FOR, DESPITE MY WORDS,
THE AMULET WAS NOT
DESTROYED--AND, THOUGH
THIS LORD CUMULUS
PERISHED, HE RELEASED
IN DEATH A SHOWER OF
STAR-SEEDS THROUGH-
OUT COSMIC INFINITY--
STAR-SEEDS EVEN AS
CHAOS ONCE WAS!"

the end

HOWARD CHAYKIN'S

AMERICAN FLAGG!



"JUSTICE...MY WAY."
REUBEN M. FLAGG

COMING

FIRST
COMICS

IN JUNE!

ESPECIALLY

Warped words

c/o FIRST COMICS, 1014 DAVIS STREET, EVANSTON, ILLINOIS 60201

COMIC BOOKS HAVE ORIGINS, TOO!

Well, there you have it. The secret origin of Chaos — Prince of Madness.

Or so you think. Maybe you should look at it as "A" secret origin. After all, we *did* leave a few loose threads here and there.

Come to think of it, we also left a bit of blank space between the end of this story and the beginning of **Warp #1**. But more on that later.

I think a few comments concerning the evolutionary process are in order. As ardent fans of the Warp plays, "we" (those of us involved who saw the plays, namely Associate Editor Rick Oliver, Sargon-scripter John Ostrander, Art Director Joe Staton and yours truly) have been well aware for some time that there are essential differences between a series of plays and a series of comic books. By our standards, there were a couple of holes in the script you could drive a truck through.

So we had a meeting — "we" now being the aforementioned Messrs. Oliver and Ostrander, Warp scripter Peter Gillis (who's been spending more time with his copy of the Warp play scripts than he has with his medieval literature tomes, which is saying something), and yours still truly — and we discussed how we could fill a few of those holes.

The important questions became obvious:

- 1) Why was Chaos stuck in the Fifth Level?
- 2) How did Chaos get trapped in David Carson's body in the first place?
- 3) How did Chaos meet up with Valaria and Symax?

The resolution, we quickly decided, was to come up with a secret origin story. After all, it's a comic book tradition, isn't it?

But since we've already decided the beings we know as Cumulus and Chaos are more *concepts* than characters, we allowed for the fact that, somehow, there always was a Prince Chaos and there always was a Lord Cumulus. That is not to say that if you kill one off, he will somehow regenerate — the Red Skull's got that one sewn up. He may or he may not. And he might regenerate in a completely different form. Which brought up another interesting aspect of the Warp universe.

Some folks who saw the Warp plays in Minneapolis or during the 1979-1981 Chicago runs might wonder why we changed Cumulus from black to white. In point of fact, the original stage Cumulus — the four actors who played the character in Chicago, New York and Washington — was white. In our ongoing **Warp** comic book, we decided to keep the

character as he was originally presented on the stage.

But the idea of a black Lord Cumulus was one that, in its own way, held our interest. So when we created a pre-David Carson Cumulus for this **Warp Special**, we decided to make him black — a tribute to (and out of respect for) the two fine actors who most recently played the role on stage.



And as you've seen from this issue's "origin" story, whereas we've chronicled the first meeting between Cumulus and Chaos, the story of *this* Lord Cumulus has yet to be told.

As you're already aware, we decided to throw in a touch of satire here and there, but essentially, what we've done is clear the stage for the original **Warp** story which has been going on these past four months.

We've *cleared* the stage, but we haven't quite finished *setting* it yet.

Between next month's battle between Xander and the denizens of the Fifth Level and the end of our adaptation of the plays — now tentatively scheduled for issue eight or nine, not counting our special epilogue — we are going to publish one more **Warp Special**. It won't necessarily be the last **Warp Special**, it'll just be the one that fills in the gap between **Warp Special #1** and **Warp #1**. It'll deal with the, ah, falling out between Chaos and Valaria, and the, ah, possession of Symax and all sorts of things that led up to the original story

Warp Special #2 will be written by Peter Gillis and pencilled, inked and colored by George Freeman, and it should be on sale in three or four months (Howard Chaykin will be quite busy writing and drawing his new monthly from First Comics, a strange saga called **American Flagg** that'll be premiering this June, where ever better comic books are sold). We're just plotting **Warp Special #2** now, and let me tell you, we're real excited.

We hope you are, too.

REGARDING LETTERS OF COMMENT for this **Warp Special** — hey, you bet, we want to see them. And read them. And take their suggestions to heart. But first we've got to *get* them — and you can send your Warped Words to us at:

ESPECIALLY WARPED WORDS

c/o First Comics, Inc.
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Evanston, IL 60201

We will be happy to run the more interesting of them in this summer's **Warp Special #2**.

Of course, we'll be running the more interesting letters received on **Warp #2** in next month's **Warp #5**. Speaking of which...

COMING NEXT MONTH: Warp #5 — "The Darkest Hour!" adapted and pencilled by **Frank Brunner**, scripted by **Peter Gillis** and inked by **Bruce Patterson**. Xander's got Cumulus and Chaos by the short hairs, to be polite, and it just might be possible Valaria's beginning to outlive her usefulness as well. Believe me, it really is their darkest hour.

And, we're beginning a new three-part series featuring Sargon — Mistress of War, written by **John Ostrander**, pencilled by **Lenin Delsol**, and inked by **Al Gordon**. It's called "The Dogs of War," and around here, we take that literally.

ALSO COMING NEXT MONTH ... since we've got your attention anyway: **E-Man #5** (**Martin Pasko** and **Joe Staton** take us on a religious and psychological trip, aptly named "Getting Void"); **Jon Sable, Freelance #3** (**Mike Grell** launches into his four-part origin story, which is *nothing* like that of Prince Chaos); and — tah-dahh! — **Starslayer #7**, now monthly, now published by First Comics! Written and broken down by **Mike Grell** and pencilled by **Lenin** (Sargon, Mistress of War) **Delsol**, this issue resolves the oft-asked question "What do you do after you've trashed the entire world?"

And, on behalf of all of us here at First Comics, have a safe and happy April Fool's Day!

— Mike Gold

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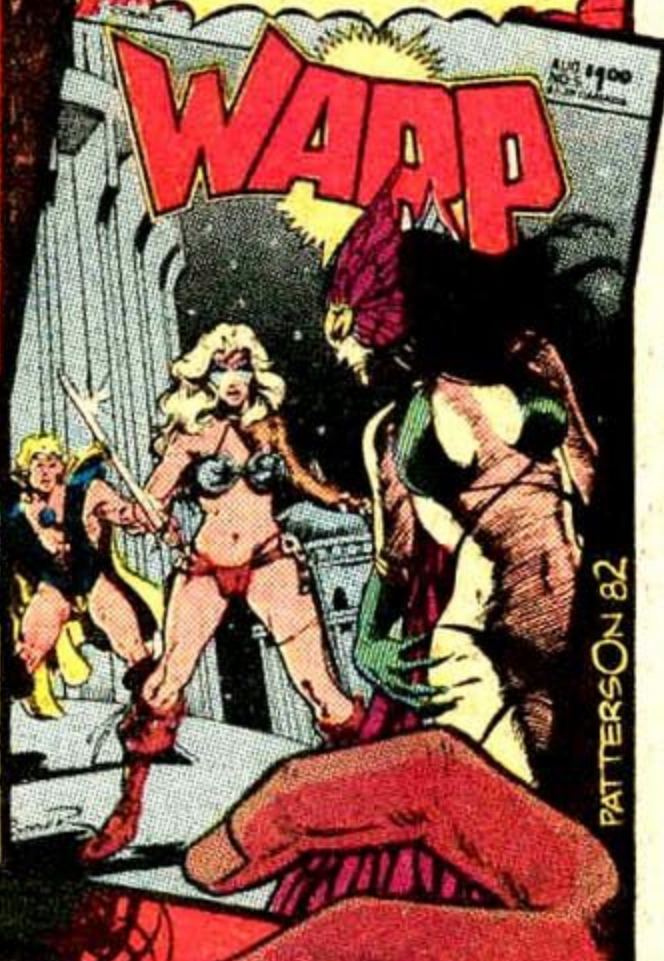
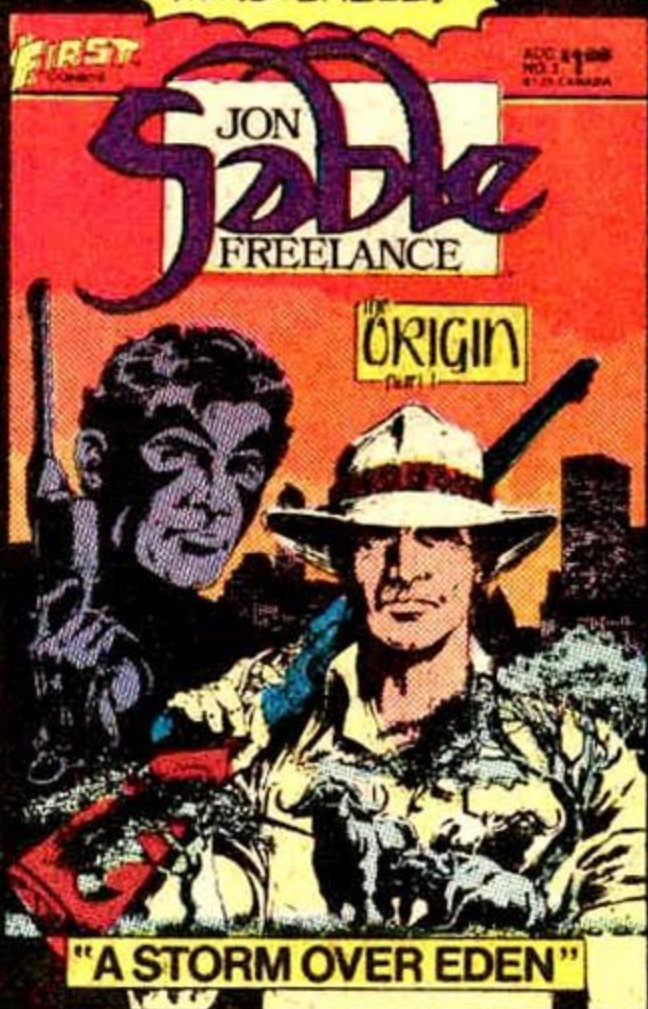
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